

March
2006

For and
About Local
Government
Development

Gone Fishing
2

Manitoba Wins When You
Count Yourself In
4

You're a Councillor!
Now What?
6

Review of Community
Contact Manuals
7

Greening Northern
Communities
8

International Standards and
Municipal Fire Departments
10

MANA Community Council
and Employee Recognition
Program
12

Community Contact

Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs



The Matheson Island Community Council uses proceeds from events like their Annual Winter Fish Derby to supplement their annual operating budget received from the province.

This Issue

Welcome to the Community Contact newsletter. In this issue, we are pleased to present information and stories that are relevant to the communities represented by Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (MANA).

Our cover story takes us to the community of Matheson Island for their seventh annual Ice Fishing Derby. We'll learn how this community uses volunteerism and community spirit to help promote community involvement and to generate local revenue for community projects.

With the community elections just completed, we have included articles on the role of community councillors and a review of community manuals. These articles will help new and returning community councillors find out more about what communities expect from elected officials and learn how to use their community manuals effectively.

This newsletter also features a heads up about the upcoming 2006 Census scheduled for May 16, 2006. Many of the services provided by MANA to our communities rely on population numbers. Be sure to count yourself in this year. Each person not counted in the Census, costs Manitoba \$36,000 in lost federal transfer payments. This in turn, can affect the services provided by MANA to communities.

This issue also looks at community recycling, community service excellence award winners from 2005 and the international standards applied to municipal and community fire departments. Enjoy the issue and feel free to contact us for additional copies or to send us your story ideas.



A funny thing happened twenty minutes before three hours of feverish ice fishing near the

From somewhere beneath a hooded, full-body snowsuit a muffled female voice shouted: "Is there anybody I know here who has caught a fish?"

After a few seconds, came the reply: "I don't know. I can't even tell who you are!"

Right on cue, the wind died briefly, and chuckling was heard from several directions, slightly muffled by damp woollen scarves.

That moment described perfectly the jovial tone of the 7th Annual Matheson Island Ice Fishing Derby. The warmest thing about the event—held February 25, 2006—was the spirit of the people.

Matheson Island, Manitoba is a relatively isolated island community located near where the south and north basins of Lake Winnipeg meet. It's accessible by air, ferry in the summer and ice road in the winter.

By the time the derby-ending siren finally did sound, the roughly 200 contestants on the ice were already mostly packed up and heading to the promise of warmth within the cabs of numerous pickup trucks lining the shore about a hundred meters away.

In mere minutes, derby fishers were on their way back to the Matheson Island Community Hall for an awards ceremony with prizes ranging from 25 per cent of the admissions pool for the heaviest fish, to a cash prize of \$50 for the lightest fish. In all, there were 10 prizes awarded in each of two categories: no-age-limit and 12-and-under.

Matheson Island residents say their annual ice fishing derby rivals New Years Eve as a reason for the community to celebrate together. This year's gathering featured a live band and special square dancing demonstrations by youngsters from the community's school.

FISHING

Before the siren went off, ending
the community of Matheson Island

How is it that a community with a population that hovers near 100 people, the vast majority of whom rely on fishing and trapping for a living, could put on such a show?

"It's all about volunteers," says Matheson Island Mayor Terry Bennett. "In this community, no matter what you want to do, you always have volunteers who will help."

He explains that the community decided back in 2000 that an Ice Fishing Derby would be a good way to raise some extra money to supplement the community's annual operations budget. An annual event ever since, its appeal has spread widely. People come from miles around—including communities like Riverton, Selkirk, Winnipeg, Berens River, Manigotagan, Norway House. They're happy to use the event as a great opportunity to get together with friends and family. It's actually become a tradition for some participants to travel great distances by snow machine to join the fishing derby fun.

"We get two birds with one stone," says Mayor Bennett. He says people who come to the community for the ice fishing derby often decide to return and visit at other times of year, after seeing what the community has to offer. The tourism dollars support local businesses and provide jobs catering to sport fishers and vacation travellers.

Bennett says the money raised during the derby is a real boon to the community. For instance, Matheson Island was recently able to expand the local community hall to accommodate growing numbers who use it for a variety of events. But tickets to the ice-fishing derby's social evening typically sell out early and, even with



Back at the community hall, the social evening begins with a square-dancing demonstration.

the hall's newly expanded capacity, this year was no exception. If you plan to take part in next year's derby, remember to get your tickets early.

Bennett explained that, as a self-governed community assisted by Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Matheson Island receives about 80 percent of its annual operating budget from the province. Just as in other Northern Affairs assisted communities, much of the remainder comes from charging fees for services and billing residents for their fair share of community expenditures.

Considering all this, it's easy to understand how a little ice fishing is a big deal in this community. Making it even more important and successful are the friendly people of Matheson Island.



Matheson Island Mayor Terry Bennett explains that his community always has a strong crew of volunteers willing to help out.

Manitoba Wins When You Count

Census Day is May

Every five years Statistics Canada conducts a Census of Canada. The next one takes place Tuesday, May 16, 2006. Every man, woman and child in Canada, and every Canadian abroad, will be asked to count themselves in.

What is the Census?

The Census is a count of all people and all households in the nation. It gathers statistics on the social and economic situations of the country and its people. As the only reliable source of such data, it shows us how we have changed every five years.

The Census is a key decision-making tool for provincial and municipal governments, business, industry, associations, academia, media, researchers and individuals. It is used to plan important services that you use in your daily life—services like health care, employment and training programs, English and French as second-language programs, heritage language classes and day-care.

The Census is important to Manitobans

It's important to count in every resident in Manitoba on Census day. Manitoba Finance estimates every Manitoban missed by the Census will cost the provincial treasury \$36,000 in lost federal transfer payments. Federal transfer payments are money from federal tax revenues paid back to provinces to support many programs and initiatives, for example, highways and municipal infrastructure.

Manitoba also uses Census data to administer Manitoba statutes, including The Unconditional Grants Act that is used to distribute money to municipalities and other local governments based on population.

Citizens who don't participate in the Census represent missed opportunities for the communities they live in. Since only one adult in each household is required to fill in a Census questionnaire, missing that opportunity can mean all people in the household will be missed by the census. Missing several households could mean millions of dollars in missed opportunities for Manitobans.

Youself in

16, 2006



Confidentiality of information

What everyone needs to know is that the privacy of every Census form is protected by the law. Only Statistics Canada employees who work directly with Census data will see completed questionnaires. All Census staff carry photo identification authorized by the Chief Statistician of Canada. Census staff must take an Oath of Secrecy in addition to passing a written and oral test and successfully completing training.

Your personal data will remain confidential forever unless you explicitly agree to share it with future generations by asking Statistics Canada to include it with data that will be publicly released for historical and genealogical research 92 years from now.

For those who give explicit permission, Statistics Canada will transfer their information to Library and Archives Canada in 2098, which in turn, will make it publicly available. The personal information of people who do not give permission will not be transferred and will be kept secure.

How will the Census be conducted?

The Census will collect information from 12.7 million households and all agricultural operations. Canada Post will deliver Census forms to about 70 per cent of households. The remaining 30 per cent will receive their form from a Census employee.

Not everyone fills in the same form. The short questionnaire

contains eight questions and is completed by 80 per cent of households. The long questionnaire goes to the remaining 20 per cent. It contains a total of 61 questions. Canadians have the option of returning their Census forms online at www.census2006.ca or by mail. All forms go to a secure national processing centre. Using Internet technology puts Canada at the forefront of Census taking.

To overcome language barriers, Census questions are made available in English, French and 62 other languages, including 18 Aboriginal languages. They will also be available in other forms including Braille, audio cassette and large print. Help with completing your Census form will be available by calling the Census Help Line starting May 1, from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., toll free at 1-877-594-2006. TTY/TDD users can call toll free 1-888-243-0730. For more information, visit the Census website online at www.census2006.ca.

Census now hiring

Statistics Canada is now hiring for short term, three to six-week positions as Census crew leaders and enumerators. Selected candidates will receive training and Aboriginal language speakers are encouraged to apply. If you are interested in 2006 Census employment, contact Jarred Baker at 204-984-3482 or Dean Senchuk at 204-983-6589. You may also visit the 2006 Census pages at the Statistics Canada website www.statcan.ca or call toll free 1-800-862-6381 for more information

You're a councillor!

Now What?

As a newly elected or returning councillor, you need to be aware of the important responsibilities attached to your role. Being an elected representative for your community is an honour and you should treat it as such.

The duties and roles of community council members are vast. Some of the responsibilities attached to your role include:

- promote good government
- act at all times in the best interests of the community
- know council limitations and departmental policy
- attend all council meetings and participate in discussions and decision making
- remain objective and unbiased
- accept responsibilities for assigned portfolios
- protect community assets
- ensure staff are adequately trained
- know and adhere to conflict of interest policy
- seek and give information to residents
- serve on committees

Financial management is a major responsibility of a community councillor. Your community council operates on Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (MANA) grants as well as revenue generated locally.

Financial management carries four distinct areas of responsibility:

- Planning—community councillors are responsible for preparing a community management plan by January 30 in each fiscal year. It typically includes items such as capital project plans, a staff training plan, a maintenance management plan and a community operations and maintenance budget.
- Implementing—once you have completed a community management plan, it is your responsibility as a councillor to ensure the plan is followed. A plan without action is like a ship without a sail.
- Controlling—it is important for councillors to be in control of community finances. Current and accurate financial data presented in an understandable way by your community administrator is of great value to councillors.
- Protecting—fraudulent misuse or outright theft of community resources is not a comfortable topic, but councillors must stay informed and aware of the risks. Councillors are empowered by the people who elect them to protect community assets.

Phew! What a lot of information to take in... but don't worry. You are not alone in carrying out your duties as a councillor. Your administrative support people are a great source of knowledge for you to draw upon.

MANA has published a variety of manuals to help you carry out your roles and responsibilities to the best of your ability.

Look for these manuals in your council office:

- Local Government Development Community Management Series Manual
- Local Government Development Manual of Policies and Procedures
- Election Officers Handbook
- Financial Management Guide
- Recreation Director's Handbook
- A Safe Workplace
- The Northern Affairs Act/Election Regulation

MANA also consults and advises communities about:

- technical and public works
- protective services
- recreation
- municipal development
- community and resource development
- environment

Although it can be a huge responsibility, the voters have elected you to take care of the public good of the whole community. Your fellow residents have invested their trust and faith in you as their councillor. Your biggest and most important responsibility is to act always with the benefit of the entire community in mind. With a little practice and a little help, the rest should all fall into place. Remember you are not alone in this process. Your community council is a team.

Review of Community Resource Manuals

OK, today's the day. You've been watching that clock on the VCR flash 12:00 for the last five years. But you're clever and you can fix it. You get off the couch and wander over to the machine. You start pushing buttons—one of them must do something.

No luck—you try a different approach. You push the buttons in a different order and still no luck. Half an hour later you've managed to record the last three minutes of Oprah, get a tape stuck in the machine and record a test pattern over the recording of your kid's first Christmas play. But the VCR is still flashing 12:00. Your spouse walks in, asks what you're doing, picks up the manual that came with the VCR, gives it a quick scan, and 30 seconds later has the correct time and day set on the machine.

Sound familiar?

For many of us, the mere thought of reading a manual is enough to put us to sleep. Sure, they provide useful information, but they're too long, too technical and it takes forever to find what you're looking for anyway, right? Well, here's some good news for you. Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (MANA) offers a number of community manuals that are easy to use, not too technical and provide answers for the most common questions.

There is no need to read the manuals from cover to cover in one sitting. Instead, use them as a reference, when you have specific questions. The manuals have been organized, indexed and tabbed to ensure you find answers easily when you need them.

Manuals produced by MANA include:

- Local Government Development Community Management Series Manual—contains information on running for council, council orientation, community incorporation, employee management, preparing a community management plan, community land use planning, subdivision process guide, and capital project planning and delivery
- Financial Management Guide—contains community administration information used mainly by community clerks and administrators
- Local Government Development Manual of Policies and Procedures—contains MANA policies and procedures that councils use in day-to-day administration of community affairs
- Election Officers Handbook—guides community election officials with information about running community elections
- Recreation Director's Handbook—recreation information and resources for community members, recreation directors, band or community councils, administrators, committees and volunteers
- A Safe Workplace—a manual required by The Workplace Safety and Health Act to help councils improve safety in their communities. It outlines the requirements of a written workplace safety and health program as required in the act.

MANA updates the manuals regularly to ensure the most current information is available. So remember, before you spend a pile of time and energy on the phone trying to find an answer, have a peek at the manual. The answer to your question may be at your fingertips—or maybe at your spouse's fingertips.



Greening Northern

To recycle or not to recycle;



David Crawford of MPSC explains that his organization provides information to help communities make their own decisions.

Did you know pop bottles, cardboard, milk cartons, newspapers, flyers and old telephone books are currently worth an average of about \$100 per metric tonne? Did you also know your community could receive up to an additional \$180 per tonne to defray the expense of collecting and shipping these items to a recycler? Added together, these numbers represent a flow of revenue that can allow northern communities to consider setting up effective community-wide recycling systems.

It's important to remember that community-based recycling is not about making money. The costs of a program and the revenue it generates will fluctuate over the long term. The goal is to balance risk and reward. Even during times when a recycling program doesn't break even, the real value to the community comes from reducing the demand for landfill space and creating work that can help stimulate the local economy.

There is also a substantial reward in the peace of mind that comes from keeping the land healthy for our children and theirs.

David Crawford, market and technical services manager for the Manitoba Product Stewardship Corporation (MPSC) puts it this way: "Would you take \$280 of your own money out to a landfill and bury it?" he asks, calling attention to the idea of using recycling revenue to keep recyclables out of landfills.

A speaker December 15, 2005 at the Aboriginal and Northern Affairs sponsored Clerk/Administrator Workshop in Winnipeg, Crawford says he understands recycling may not work in every community, but he also says it has plenty to do with the priorities set by community leaders and the commitment of the people who live there.

If any organization knows about recycling in Manitoba, MPSC does. It was set up in 1995 to encourage expansion of recycling in all economic sectors across Manitoba. Managed by an independent board of directors, MPSC is a statutory, non-profit corporation that operates at arm's-length from provincial government. Currently, its sole source of operating funds is the two-cent levy collected on beverage containers sold in Manitoba.

Crawford understands that setting up a community-wide recycling program isn't always a priority for local leaders. But he cautions that it's important for community members and their leaders to have to look at the big picture before ruling it out.

For communities who want to know why they should bother, Crawford says there are two main reasons. The first reason, says Crawford, is space. He refers to the fact that landfills eat up land that won't be used for anything else for generations. They also represent an ongoing cost to operate. And once a landfill is full, a replacement landfill must open in a new location.

Opening a new landfill operation is a major expense for any community. Anything that will delay the expense and stretch the useful years of the existing landfill is just plain wise. A community recycling program can do that, says Crawford. A mature, well-run recycling program can divert about a tonne of waste per year from landfills for every 10 people in the community.

The second reason to consider community recycling might be the most important one to many people. That reason is the issue of

Communities

it's a community question

toxicity. Properly designed and maintained landfills keep many hazardous by-products out of the environment, but there really is no such thing as a landfill free of environmental consequences. Landfills are a risk to watersheds and the biological processes that digest wastes in landfills produce methane gas. Methane gas is one of the so-called greenhouse gases blamed for global warming.

While recycling makes sense because it lengthens the life span of a landfill, there is something else to consider. Recycling materials saves energy. Crawford says making a new aluminum can by recycling an old one saves 95 per cent of the energy it took to make the original. The story is similar for plastics, cardboard and various other materials. Generating the energy to create new products from raw materials is less sustainable when compared to recycling. This is part of what gives recycled materials their value.

In fact, many recycled materials are globally traded commodities. Loosely defined, a commodity is a product whose price relies on demand, supply and current dollar values. Crawford recommends looking at recycled commodities as if they were mutual fund investments. Carefully selected mutual funds usually generate income over the long term. The secret is to stay in the game when the commodity price falls so that you can profit when it rises again.



Operating an efficient system for collecting recyclable materials relates to the size of a community and its needs.

David Crawford invites Manitoba communities to tell MPSC about their needs and priorities in setting up recycling systems. His organization has the tools to provide a realistic picture of what's involved in environmentally responsible community-wide recycling.

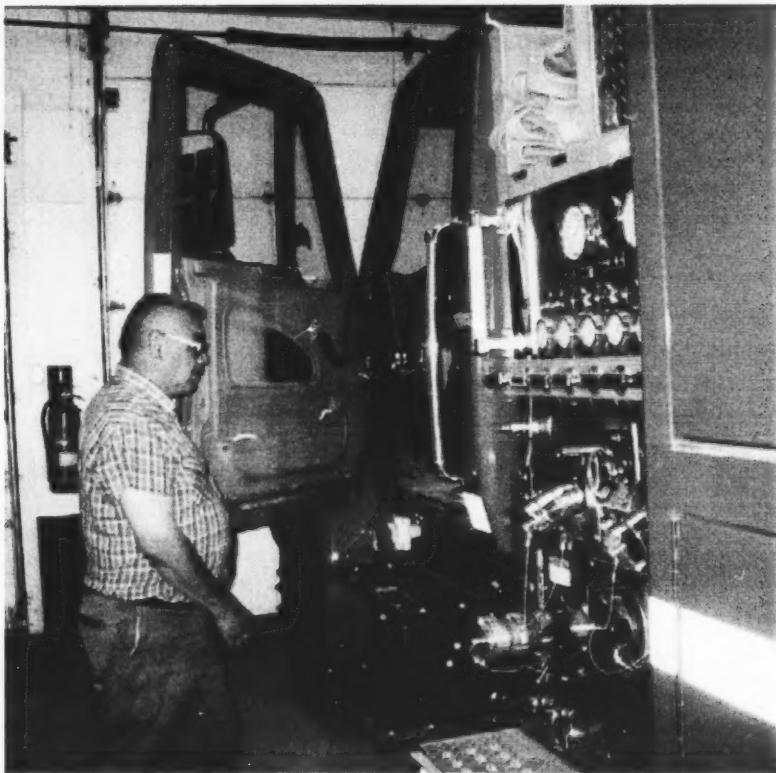
If your community is committed to the idea of recycling and wants to find out what is involved, start by visiting the MPSC website at www.mpsc.com. Find out what resources MPSC can bring to the table that will enable your community to make important decisions.

"We don't approve or disapprove of decisions communities make," says Crawford, "We enable local decision making."



Many recyclables are globally traded commodities. Collecting them keeps them out of the landfills.

International Standards and Municipal Fire



Manigotagan Fire Chief Charlie Simard knows the importance of having well-maintained equipment and properly trained fire fighters.

In Canada, there are about 3,700 fire services ranging from small volunteer brigades to large urban fire departments. They all face similar risks, but accepting international standards helps them meet common expectations for fire fighting and fire fighter safety. Most often, the standards are National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards.

NFPA is a not-for-profit international standards development organization founded in 1896. A Canadian insurance company was one of the original NFPA founders and Canadians have long played important roles as members and directors. Fire Chief Terry Allen of Cambridge, Ontario currently chairs the NFPA Fire Services Section. All Canadian provinces certifying fire fighters use NFPA standards.

The NFPA is about more than just fire. NFPA standards apply to many aspects of emergency response, public safety and the built environment. There are over 40 NFPA reference standards in the National Building Code of Canada 2005, the bible of the construction industry.

NFPA does much more than write standards. Its public safety education campaigns have been used throughout Canada for decades. They include Risk Watch, Learn Not to Burn and Fire Prevention Week. NFPA is a diverse and valuable Canadian public safety organization.

NFPA standards provide the essential framework for emergency service operations. They provide

Departments

guidance on aspects such as professional qualifications, best practices, safety, communications and reporting. Each standard is on a three-to-five-year cycle for review. This helps to ensure consideration of the latest information about fire loss experience, science and technology, fiscal concerns and public expectations.

NFPA's process for developing standards is uniquely open and democratic, and it enjoys widespread adoption because of this. Under an open, consensus-based framework, anyone can participate in standards development. Membership is not required. All comments receive responses from technical committees that include balanced representation from all segments of society. All technical committee recommendations are made public.

NFPA has even recently added free public access to all its codes and standards through its website at www.nfpa.org. NFPA believes developing standards openly assures a balance between acceptable risk, society's expectations and costs.

In Canada, the Fire Underwriters Survey (FUS) is a key tool used by insurers to assess community fire protection measures. It assigns a dwelling protection rating and a community protection rating. These ratings affect fire insurance premiums paid by homeowners and businesses.

FUS ratings of fire department operations are based on NFPA standards, allowing consistency across Canada. Using NFPA-based guidelines also makes it easier to determine the effects of changes to fire protection on home and business owner insurance premiums.

A good starting point for a municipality may be to perform a self-assessment using NFPA 1201: Standard for Providing Emergency Services to the Public 2004 Edition. Available through the NFPA website, this document contains requirements for the structure and operations of emergency service organizations and can help review or update a fire department's master plan.

Fire department master planning is essential regardless of community size. The plan should involve public comment and should identify the services provided by the fire department, the level of response and any capital plans. The plan is a useful tool for a municipal fire department in reporting to council. In such a report, a fire department can identify services it provided and rate their success. It can also identify any shortfalls and resource needs. Requirements to meet NFPA standards often form the basis to request training, equipment and personnel resources.

Legal rulings in Canada have always supported public officials in defining policy

and meeting common operational standards like NFPA standards. For example, if municipal leaders decided to establish a fire department-based water rescue service, they would need to provide proper equipment and training. Using equipment and training meeting NFPA standards helps protect the community from increased liability. Even when NFPA standards are not adopted in community legislation, courts have supported them as examples of best practices and due diligence.

NFPA standards represent the continuing evolution of best practices for emergency services. Fire and other emergency services use them increasingly to identify resource needs. NFPA represents consensus-based standards well integrated with North American public emergency response framework. They are worth observing.

Community Contact thanks Sean Tracey (P.Eng., MIFireE, ARM), NFPA Canadian Regional Manager, for information used in this article. Reach Sean at his Ottawa office by telephoning 613-830-9102 or by e-mailing stracey@nfpa.org. NFPA provides free technical support to municipal officials and NFPA members.

MANA Community Council and Employee Recognition Program

Two components of the Community Council and Employee Recognition Program are Years of Service and Service Excellence Awards. The awards have been presented to council members and employees for the past few years. The Service Excellence Awards have targeted good financial and infrastructure audits.

In January 2005, Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (MANA) put in place another component of the program so council or council employees could nominate an individual for service excellence related to their job function or for volunteer activities.

The following individuals are eligible for nomination:



Both Island Lake residents, RCMP Constable Chris Banks (left) received a volunteer award for his work in improving recreation opportunities for young people and Jerry Hinatiw (right) received an humanitarian award for 22 years of providing school transportation for children from nursery school to Grade 9.



Councillor Frank Dysart (above) of South Indian Lake received a volunteer award for work with youth in his community.

- administrators
- clerks
- public works employees (water, wastewater and solid waste operators)
- constables
- emergency measures workers
- fire fighters
- recreation directors
- volunteers

Nominations close on March 31, annually. A MANA selection committee determines winners and arranges for presentations of awards. The selection committee reviews nominations based on specific criteria developed for this program. These criteria range from significant community management achievements to volunteer excellence that improves the quality of life in communities.

Please help MANA promote this worthwhile program by giving nomination forms to all council members and council employees.

We believe that council's greatest assets are their employees and that deserving individuals should be recognized for their efforts. Nominate someone for a MANA Service Excellence Award today!

Community Contact

Community Council members, community residents and departmental staff are strongly encouraged to submit feedback, comments, questions, suggestions and ideas to the editor.

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